

**A Report to
Iowa Governor Thomas J. Vilsack**



**from the
Task Force for Responsible Fatherhood**

JANUARY 2002

**Task Force for Responsible Fatherhood
Report to Governor Thomas J. Vilsack**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Governor Thomas J. Vilsack established the Governor's Task Force for Responsible Fatherhood through Executive Order Seventeen on February 13, 2001. The purpose of the Task Force is to heighten understanding of the importance of two parents being actively involved in the lives of children, with a particular emphasis on the involvement of fathers. Governor Vilsack asked the Task Force to do the following:

- ◆ Identify promising best practices that support and engage both parents in the emotional and financial support of their children;
- ◆ Identify obstacles that impede or prevent the involvement of fathers in the lives of their children;
- ◆ Raise public awareness of the consequences the absence of the father causes in a child's life;
- ◆ Make recommendations for policy and practice both within and without state government that sustain and re-engage fathers in their children's lives.

Background

The Task Force recognizes the difficult job faced by single parents in raising their children. While many single parents are able to raise their children to be responsible and successful adults by themselves, the need to engage both parents, especially non-custodial fathers, in the lives of their children is readily apparent. Many studies underscore and reinforce what Iowans intuitively know: that children need the support and guidance of both parents. Children without both parents involved in their lives are more likely to live in poverty, twice as likely to drop out of school, have lower academic achievement, and a significantly greater risk of drug, and alcohol abuse.

The lives of men and their children are positively transformed by the experience of committed fatherhood. All parents need support in the difficult task of being good parents. Fathers can learn from each other, from their own fathers, from their children's mothers and from their children, and from community and professional service providers in many areas about how to be better fathers and responsible citizens. In recent years a growing number of national and local organizations, conferences, publications, and public events have drawn increasing attention to the importance of specifically targeting the promotion of responsible fatherhood as an issue requiring public attention and resources.

Guiding Principles

The Task Force members, in their examination of the issues of fatherlessness, identified four guiding principles upon which to base their work. These principles are:

- ◆ Children thrive when both parents are actively and positively involved in the lives of their children.
- ◆ Healthy, stable, safe, and stronger families result when communities at all levels – individuals, schools, businesses, employers, the media, community groups, the faith community, and government -- all understand and demonstrate family-friendly and father-inclusive approaches in their everyday activities.
- ◆ Government at all levels should acknowledge the importance of fathers and support the implementation of father-friendly rules, policies and practices.
- ◆ Effective fatherhood programs include continuous evaluation and improvement, have demonstrable and measurable results, and incorporate best practices.

Recommendations



From their own varied experiences and perspectives Task Force members identified a number of obstacles to personal or financial involvement with their children that fathers, especially those who do not live with their children, face. Most of the barriers could be categorized in three main areas:

- ◆ Lack of awareness both by the general public and by individuals of the importance of fathers;
- ◆ Lack of education, training, and information – both formal and informal;
- ◆ Lack of adequate income.

The Task Force then worked to identify the following recommendations for Governor Vilsack's consideration. In summary, these recommendations are:

- 1.** Establish a locus of responsibility for fatherhood issues, initiatives and activities within state government.
- 2.** Heighten public awareness of the importance of fathers and spur further support for fatherhood issues by bringing together interested community groups and practitioners on a regular ongoing basis.
- 3.** Advocate that all programs and services provided to families by public agencies address the appropriate involvement of both parents in raising their children. Service providers must take into account the varying needs of fathers at different stages of their lives and base their services upon the idea of lifelong education.
- 4.** Encourage state government to use its leadership to:
 - ☐ Partner with business, communities and education to help secure "Better Paid Iowans"; a living wage is an important key to helping fathers support their children.
 - ☐ Examine the existing policies and practices of all branches of government to determine their father-friendliness.
 - ☐ Coordinate various programs to complement each other.
 - ☐ Ensure that publicly funded programs are based upon guiding principles defined in this report.
 - ☐ Ensure that programming is provided for fathers with widely varied needs.
 - ☐ Strive for a balanced approach between prevention and intervention for initiatives, programs, funding, and policy making.
 - ☐ Monitor and report on initiatives, results, lessons learned, and best practices.
 - ☐ Provide technical assistance for results measurement to ensure that all fatherhood programs developed within the state have demonstrable and measurable results.
 - ☐ Support the courts in considering the importance of the roles of fathers when issuing decisions that affect families.
- 5.** Make the educational system at all levels aware of the importance of involving both parents in their children's educational development.
- 6.** Encourage mental health, substance abuse, adult corrections, juvenile justice, and child welfare professionals to recognize that their work strongly affects good parenting. Emphasize parenting education as part of the treatment.

- 7.** Develop pre- and post-incarceration support programs with support systems after release for both juveniles and adult males.
- 8.** Seek to make the workplace more family- and parent-friendly. In order to be a more family-friendly and father-inclusive workplace, employers -- state government and private employers -- must provide a workplace that helps create healthy, stable, safe, and strong families and a more productive workforce.
- 9.** Build on existing work programs for men by linking them with issues of fatherhood.
- 10.** Children benefit from living with both parents in a loving stable relationship that is a partnership.

One of Governor Vilsack's initial steps in addressing fatherhood issues was to create the Interagency Workgroup, whose report was submitted in December 2000. The report and the ten recommendations of the Task Force represent the next step in Iowa's actively encouraging and supporting the involvement of both parents in the lives of their children. The Task Force believes that any further discussions around this issue should be certain to include parents, including single mothers and fathers and those who are married or in long term relationships, divorced mothers and fathers, and young men and women who will be fathers and mothers.

Fatherhood has many facets and the issues can be complex and numerous. The Task Force submits this report to Governor Vilsack with their sincere thanks, encouragement, and support to the Governor as he leads Iowans to create a place where children benefit fully from the involvement of their fathers in their lives.

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I. Introduction

Governor Thomas J. Vilsack established the Governor's Task Force for Responsible Fatherhood through Executive Order Seventeen on February 13, 2001. The purpose of the Task Force is to heighten understanding of the importance of two parents being actively involved in the lives of children, with a particular emphasis on the involvement of fathers. Governor Vilsack asked the Task Force to do the following:

- ☐ Identify promising best practices that support and engage both parents in the emotional and financial support of their children;
- ☐ Identify obstacles that impede or prevent the involvement of fathers in the lives of their children;
- ☐ Raise public awareness of the consequences the absence of the father causes in a child's life;
- ☐ Make recommendations for policy and practice both within and without state government that sustain and re-engage fathers in their children's lives.

The Task Force focused on recommending policies and practices designed to support fatherhood as a more positive and responsible force in the lives of Iowa's children. The Task Force was charged with reporting its findings and recommendations to the Governor by March 31, 2002. To that end, the Task Force for Responsible Fatherhood now issues this report to the Governor. (For more details on Executive Orders Fifteen and Seventeen, please refer to Section IV, History, and the Appendix of this report.)

Far too many children are growing up with fathers who are absent or on the fringes of their lives. The Task Force fully respects the efforts of single parents who seek to meet the needs of their children with the supports that are available to them. The Task Force recognizes that many single parents are able to raise their children to become successful and productive adults. However, the absence of one parent from a child's life can place that child at greater risk of health, emotional, educational, and behavioral problems associated with the child's development. The Task Force affirms the importance of both parents in the lives of their children.

This Task Force's focus is on fathers because, for most children, the absent parent is the father, and because, all too often, policies and practices have failed to sufficiently or specifically encourage or facilitate the positive involvement of fathers in the lives of their children.

The Task Force realized that they could not address all the issues of all fathers, and chose to focus on those fathers who encounter obstacles in involvement with their children. The Task Force members acknowledge that there are many other issues related to fatherhood: family structure, minority and cross-cultural issues, and disengagement within intact families. Future fatherhood activities may choose to look at these issues in depth.

Children need and want fathers involved in their day-to-day lives. Fatherless children are at a significantly greater risk for drug and alcohol abuse, and are twice as likely to drop out of school. The vast majority of homeless and runaway children are from fatherless homes. Children living in single parent homes, where it is the father who the absent parent over 84% of the time, are more likely to be living in poverty. A father can support his child's mother in her mothering role, and can be an active partner in parenting, regardless of the status of his personal relationship with the mother.

The lives of men and their children are positively transformed by the experience of committed fatherhood. All men need support in the difficult task of being a good father. Fathers can learn from each other, from their own fathers, from their children's mothers and from their children, and from community and professional service providers in many areas about how to be better fathers and responsible citizens. In recent years a growing number of national and local organizations, conferences, publications, and public events have drawn increasing attention to the importance of specifically targeting the promotion of responsible fatherhood as an issue requiring public attention and resources.

For all these reasons, the Task Force for Responsible Fatherhood encourages all fathers to support their children personally, financially, emotionally, and legally, and to stay involved in their children's lives. To that end, we support the analyses and conclusions, and make the recommendations contained in this report.

II. Background

Various data sources provide some indication of the circumstances that may impact children negatively. The magnitude of the issue for our children is reflected in the numbers. In addition, national research on the consequences of these risk factors provides insight into the issues.

A. Risk Factors for Iowa Children

- Of the 733,638 children in Iowa under the age of 18 (according to the Kids Count Data Book, 2001 edition) 100,262 children are living in poverty according U.S. Census Bureau County Estimates for 1997. Approximately 54% of these children live with only one parent present in the household.

- ☐ Based on 1998 Iowa Birth Certification file, 12% of live births did not have information on the father available at the time of the birth. Vital Statistics of Iowa, 1998, prepared by the Center for Health Statistics, Iowa Department of Public Health.
- ☐ In any given month, children owed child support in approximately 38,505 cases receive no payments toward current support. Bureau of Collections, Iowa Department of Human Services, 2000.

B. Consequences of Fatherlessness

- ☐ Seventy-five per cent of all adolescents in chemical abuse centers come from fatherless homes. Dept. of Health and Human Services. National Center for Health Statistics. Survey on Child Health. Washington, DC, 1993.
- ☐ Seventy-one per cent of all high school dropouts come from fatherless homes. US Dept. of Health and Human Services. National Center for Health Statistics. Survey on Child Health. Washington, DC, 1993. Institute for Responsible Fatherhood and Family Revitalization, quoting from a recent study by Men Against Domestic Violence.
- ☐ Three out of four teenage suicides occur in households where a parent has been absent. Ninety per cent of all homeless and runaway children are from fatherless homes. Elshtain, Jean Bethke, "Family Matters: The Plight of America's Children." The Christian Century, July 1993. Institute for Responsible Fatherhood and Family Revitalization, quoting from a recent study by Men Against Domestic Violence.
- ☐ "... children raised apart from one of their parents are less successful in adulthood..., and...many of their problems result from a loss of income, parental involvement and supervision, and ties to the community." McLanahan & Sandefur, 1994. Growing Up with a Single Parent, p 134.

C. Benefits of Both Parents' Involvement with Children

The Task Force wants to emphasize again their understanding and appreciation of the very difficult job performed by single parents in raising their children successfully. Many single parents do an excellent job. However, a second parent's involvement could augment and enhance these efforts. The following are samples of the research on the benefits for children when they receive the active support of both parents.

- **Education**

When both parents are involved in the child's education e.g., attending school meetings, parent-teacher conferences, volunteering at school, class events, there is a higher likelihood that the child will receive high grades and enjoy school and reduce the likelihood that a grade will be repeated. Nord, C.W., Brimhall, D. & West, J. Fathers' Involvement in Schools, 1997, U.S. Department of Education in "What Do Fathers Contribute to Children's Well Being" Child Trends Research Brief.

- **Health and Well Being**

The involvement and support of the father is the best predictor that the mother will receive adequate prenatal care. Prenatal care ensures a healthy start for children. Fathers: A Huge Influence for Young Children, Center for Public Policy Priorities.

According to a Gallup Poll, 90.3 percent of Americans agree that “fathers make a unique contribution to their children’s lives” Gallup Poll, 1996. National Center for Fathering “Father Figures”. Today’s Father 4.1 (1996).

A study on parent-infant attachment found that fathers who were affectionate, spent time with their children, and overall had a positive attitude were more likely to have securely attached infants. Cox, M.J. et al. “Prediction of Infant-Father and Infant-Mother Attachment”. Developmental Psychology 28 (1992): 474-483.

Father-child interaction has been shown to promote a child’s physical well being, perceptual abilities, and competency for relatedness with others, even at a young age. Krampe, E. M. and P. D. Fairweather. “Father Presence and Family Formation: A Theoretical Reformation.” Journal of Family Issues 14.4 (December 1993): 572-591.

- ***Economic Security***

Both parents supporting the child financially reduce risk factors associated with poverty. Poverty levels are reduced when both parents are present: single parent families have a poverty rate of 46% while two parent families have a rate of approximately 10%. Map and Track: State Initiatives to Encourage Responsible Fatherhood, 1999 Edition, National Center for Children in Poverty.

III. A History of Recent Fatherhood Initiatives and Activities in Iowa



On the national and the state level, government is becoming increasingly aware of the need to get and keep both parents involved in the personal and financial support of their children. One step in this direction grew out of the federal Balanced Budget Act of 1997 that established funding for states for the Welfare to Work program. Iowa Workforce Development partnered with the Bureau of Collections (Iowa's child

support program) in a joint effort to provide services to non-custodial parents to help place them in jobs so they can better provide for the financial support of their families. Parents are offered special financial incentives to maintain their participation in the program. In addition, after a number of months of regularly paying child support a portion of their child support debt owed to the state may be forgiven.

A recent Iowa survey revealed a lack of consistent and available programming for responsible parenting. Programs are aimed primarily at mothers who are most often the custodial parents of young children when both parents are not in the family home. In fact, the non-custodial parent is frequently not eligible for the services that are available to the custodial parent.

In response to this lack of service availability, the General Assembly appropriated funding from the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) block grant to implement strategies at the community level to keep both parents involved with their children. In 1999 and 2000, seven projects were funded with TANF dollars and federal Access and Visitation grants. These projects provide a variety of services, but most include parent and family mentoring, mediation services, neutral exchange sites, parent and child activities, and fatherhood support and education services.

In Executive Order Number 15, signed on March 14, 2000, Governor Thomas J. Vilsack addressed the issue of responsible parenthood. The Executive Order acknowledges that children need to receive the support and guidance of both parents. To begin the efforts of ensuring that both parents are involved in the lives of their children, Governor Vilsack established a State Interagency Work Group. This work group, made up of representatives from the Departments of Human Services, Public Health, Corrections, Education, Criminal and Juvenile Justice Planning, Iowa Workforce Development, and the Empowerment Board, was charged with tasks to include:

- ☐ Identifying barriers within policies, procedures and practices that deter the involvement of both parents.
- ☐ Identifying promising practices that support and engage both parents in the emotional and financial support of their children.
- ☐ Identifying opportunities that may exist among programs administered by departments to assist the absent parent in providing emotional and financial support.
- ☐ Attempting to quantify benefits of increasing the level of involvement of both parents, and
- ☐ Proposing recommendations to remove barriers to responsible parenting.

This Work Group subsequently made 13 recommendations to the Governor. These recommendations were:

1. Remove barriers in policy and practice
2. Increase awareness of the public and professionals
3. Implement cross training of disciplines
4. Create a network to support families in partnership with communities
5. Improve communication across delivery system
6. Offer parents opportunities to increase knowledge and skills
7. Ensure availability of resource guides by local areas
8. Develop guidance for staff when working with families where both parents cannot be safely involved in the child's life
9. Encourage the reporting of the impact of services to families
10. Continue opportunities for state agencies to discuss parenthood issues
11. Develop partnerships across state agencies to implement policy and programs
12. Communicate lessons learned from projects underway in Iowa
13. Create a task force to champion responsible parenthood

One of the outcomes of these recommendations was Executive Order 17, signed on February 13, 2001, which established the Task Force for Responsible Fatherhood. The charge contained in Executive Order 17, in addition to the establishment of the Task Force, included:

- The identification of promising best practices,
- The identification of obstacles to father involvement,
- To heighten public awareness, and
- To make recommendations for changes both inside and outside State government.

The Task Force for Responsible Fatherhood was assembled in March of 2001 (See appendix for the Task Force membership), and has met on a regular basis throughout the year to accomplish this charge from Governor Vilsack.

IV. Guiding Principles

The Task Force members agreed on important values which they established as guiding principles.

1. Loving, responsible mothers and fathers are equally important and have a positive impact on the lives of children, and the absence of either parent can have negative effects. In most single-parent homes, the father is the absent parent. Though not living with their children, fathers can still be actively and positively involved. Loving, responsible fathers take into account what is best for their children in their actions and decisions. They actively share with mothers in financially and personally supporting their children and set an example for their children by respecting the mothers. They do not engage in violent behavior towards her or the children. They do not engage in abuse of alcohol or drugs or other self-destructive behavior. On the basis of this, we believe:

Children thrive when both parents are actively and positively involved in the lives of their children.

2. When employers include the needs of both parents in their personnel policies in a family-oriented manner, there are two key results: they have a more productive workforce, and parents are better able to care for their children. When schools actively support the involvement of both parents in their child's education, parents remain more active in their children's lives and children benefit. Schools also benefit from the participation of both parents. When the media exercise their influence by showing both parents' role in children's lives in a balanced way, public opinion is positively affected. On the basis of this, we believe:

Healthy, stable, safe, and stronger families result when communities at all levels – individuals, schools, businesses, employers, the media, community groups, the faith community, and government -- all understand and demonstrate family-friendly and father-inclusive approaches in their everyday activities.

3. The role of government should be one of leadership in affirming the need to value each parent. Executive branch departments, such as the Departments of Education, Public Health, Human Services, Corrections, and Workforce Development should consider the impact that policies and practices have on fathers' involvement and on families as a whole. As the General Assembly considers the impact of new legislation, it is desirable to understand the effect on families and on fathers' involvement with their children. As the courts make their determinations in their work with parents and children, it is essential to recognize and support the roles of fathers. On the basis of this, we believe:

Government at all levels should acknowledge the importance of fathers and support the implementation of father-friendly policies and practices.

4. We have learned some characteristics of effective programs from efforts in Iowa as well as those in other states. Results-based programs, through continuous monitoring and evaluation, demonstrate what's working or not working and are best able to adjust their activities to improve results. Programs with the flexibility to incorporate best practice information from other programs can maximize results. By sharing results, other programs can benefit.
- Programs should be designed to meet the needs of fathers at all life stages and be culturally sensitive.
 - New young dads, adoptive dads, step-dads and dads from different cultures may have different needs.
 - The needs of children differ depending upon the strengths and needs of their parents in areas such as job skills, income, education, and substance abuse or mental health problems.

Programs that help fathers work with their children must start where he is, at his current level of parenting. Experienced fathers can best serve as the mentors for other men through advice and by example. Programming must include long-term and short-term strategies. Change takes time and must be encouraged and cultivated. On the basis of this, we believe:

Effective fatherhood programs include continuous evaluation and improvement, have demonstrable and measurable results, and incorporate best practices.

V. The Task Force

The Task Force is a cross-section of Iowa men and women who value quality parenting by both parents, and who volunteered their time, experience and knowledge to examine fatherhood in Iowa to make recommendations to Governor Vilsack. (For brief biographical statements about the Task Force Members, please refer to the Appendix of this report.)

Former Senator Elaine Szymoniak, Chair of the Task Force, is a member of national organizations that focus their attention on fatherhood issues. Through Sen. Szymoniak's leadership, the Task Force prepared themselves to make their recommendations. As part of their work, the Task Force reviewed published materials about fatherhood, and hosted speakers who have expertise in the area.

The Task Force reviewed a variety of written materials and met with individuals working with fathers at the state, national and local levels. Details on speakers and their presentations, and detailed listing of materials consulted are provided in the Appendix.

VI. Defining the Scope of the Work

The Task Force wishes to present a supportive picture of single mothers, a balanced view of the importance of mothers and fathers, and insists the safety of mothers and children never be compromised. The Task Force agreed that their intent, expressed through this report and their recommendations, was to encourage an environment that would promote emotional and financial stability for children, and fully supports the involvement of both mothers and fathers. Even though the focus of the Task Force was on the issues of non-custodial fathers, the Task Force noted that some fathers who live with their children and the mothers, may not be fully engaged with their children (e.g., those who are totally committed to their jobs or other activities). However, solving the problem of the disengaged father is outside the scope of this Task Force.

Roy Knicley, a Department of Human Services facilitator, led the Task Force through the process of identifying the barriers and sub-barriers that interfere with fathers' involvement with their children. The Task Force identified nearly 125 issues in its discussions. Clearly, this illustrates the breadth and depth of the strategic issues.

The following chart shows obstacles and barriers to father involvement identified by the Task Force.

Obstacles to fathers' personal involvement are:	Barriers to fathers' financial involvement are:
Values: Cultural or social values may present barriers. Among these are perceptions of male dominance, and peer pressure to "act like a man."	Unemployment or lack of income: Some fathers lack basic job seeking skills or job retention skills. Others may be chronically unemployed or underemployed.
Stereotypes: Social perceptions about men in general as well as various ethnic groups may be a barrier to effective and positive fathering.	Substance abuse and health: A wide range of issues in this area may be a financial barrier to involvement or employment, including the stress of disability, and uninsured children and families.
Lack of Education: Fathers may have limited education. Many men need parenting role models, lack work skills, lack social skills and, in general, do not recognize how important they are to their children.	Family configuration: The structure of the family may pose financial barriers, including problems with the community environment, societal norms, and the issues of serial and blended families.
Family configuration: The structure of the family may pose a barrier, such as living in a single-parent household, living in a dysfunctional family, a new partner in the mother's life, or unplanned pregnancies, as well as the community environment, societal norms, problems of serial, blended, and multi-generational families.	Education: Some fathers may lack adequate life skills (conflict resolution, parenting, and communication). "Dropping out", and literacy problems may all cause financial barriers to parental involvement.
Physical Absence: The physical absence of the father from a child's life creates a barrier to involvement.	Public policy: Policy and practice can inadvertently create barriers to father involvement.
Substance abuse and health: A wide range of issues in this area may be a barrier to involvement.	Domestic violence: Issues include the need for alternative housing, and the impact of the cost of court involvement and treatment.
Work place environment: The work environment often poses barriers to fathers. These include lack of childcare, lack of transportation, inflexibility in work hours, parental leave policy, or job retention issues.	Work environment: Issues include employee attitude, presence or absence of a work ethic, lack of interest in a career path, employer attitudes and the presence or lack of family friendly policies, and peer attitudes.
Domestic violence: This barrier is complicated. It includes issues of fathers who are physically abusive. This presents safety concerns for the child and mother, and emotional issues for the child as well as the father. These emotional issues, including shame and guilt, may hinder father/child attachment due to the resulting absence or withdrawal.	
Public policy on all levels: Public policy and practice may present a barrier to father involvement.	

The above categories were then evaluated within the context of the following three areas:

- Awareness – both public and individual (or private) awareness
- Lack of Education – both formal and informal education and training
- Lack of Income

The Task Force then built on this work to identify, sort and prioritize the issues in order to formulate recommendations. As a result of their discussions, the Task Force developed ten recommendations. These recommendations address state and local government, communities, families, and the state as a whole.

VII. Recommendations



The Task Force for Responsible Fatherhood makes the following recommendations for Iowa:

1. Establish a Focal Point for Fatherhood

Establish a locus of responsibility for fatherhood issues, initiatives and activities within state government. This provides a single, centralized place to promote a consistent message, direction, and emphasis for Iowa's fatherhood efforts.

- A. This locus could take the form of an independent "office" within the executive Branch, an "office" within the Governor's office, or a Commission. An option could be establishing an ongoing interagency task force comprised of Executive Branch department heads and a work group made up of their appointees.
- B. The tasks of this entity fall into four general areas: working within state government; coordinating and encouraging fatherhood efforts between state government and the private sector; creating and maximizing federal, private and local funding efforts; and guiding a public awareness campaign. The activities associated with these tasks include:

- **Ensure that all grant requests and funding issued by the state be father-friendly.** State government must be clear in its message that involved fathers are important to children.
- **Focus on results.** Maintain data on outcomes of all programs funded with public funds across the state. By maintaining information on these programs, developing programs can learn from the lessons of their predecessors and policymakers will have access to accurate and consistent information.
- **Facilitate the recommendations of the Governor's Task Force for Responsible Fatherhood accepted by the Governor.**
- **Facilitate and support the process to secure new federal and private funding for fatherhood efforts.** Maintain commitment to funding levels of programs for children and mothers as new commitments are made to fathers.
- **Increase collaboration of state and private agencies.** By proactively aligning initiatives that address the issue of fatherhood, including grant programs, state government can help people work together to make those efforts more effective and avoid duplication of effort and inefficient use of resources.
- **Compile and share promising and best practices.** Other states and several national organizations are also involved in developing fatherhood programs. By serving as a clearinghouse for fatherhood information and by compiling information on these practices and their success and failures, technical assistance will be available to Iowa's programs.
- **Use all forms of media to heighten awareness of the importance of fathers.** The media's portrayal of fathers in a less than positive light has often contributed to society's and fathers' own perceptions that fathers are not important to their children. Fathers must realize how important they are in the lives and development of their children.

2. Heighten awareness through training and communication

Heighten public awareness of the importance of fathers and spur further support for fatherhood issues by bringing together interested community groups and practitioners on a regular ongoing basis. The initial workshop should bring together those programs currently working with fathers and those who are interested in expanding their efforts in this area. As an early part of the public awareness campaign, the Task Force believes a statewide fatherhood workshop involving many different kinds of interested people is an effective way to initiate

this new phase of Iowa's efforts. The workshop should offer sessions and workshops on at least two levels: for training the trainers and program development for practitioners, and an "educational roadshow" for dads. Arrange for the "educational roadshow" to travel across the state to be accessible to dads in many communities.

- **Agencies can be encouraged to interact around the issue of fatherhood, their staffs can be offered training in effective ways to involve fathers and families, and their awareness of the importance of both parents in children's success can be heightened.** In addition, the agencies can join together and use the first workshop as a platform to kick off their efforts in addressing fatherhood issues.
- **Include presentations and information about efforts currently underway across the state.** This will serve to further awaken interest for people by letting them know that programs are currently operating in communities near them.
- **Bring in experts who have experience in running programs in the area of fatherhood or those who have been heavily involved in research to underscore the importance of the message that fathers are a major factor in successful outcomes for their children.**
- **Seek foundation or private sponsorship.** There are foundations for whom fatherhood is a major interest and they may be willing to sponsor or underwrite such a workshop.
- **Experiences in a number of other states indicate that it is very important to frequently share the message that responsible fathering improves outcomes for children.**

3. What Public Programs Must Include

Advocate that all programs and services provided to families by public agencies address the appropriate involvement of both parents in raising their children. Service providers must take into account the varying needs of fathers at different stages of their lives and base their services upon the idea of lifelong learning. It is believed this approach will help create empowered and engaged dads. Perhaps the most important assistance we can offer to families is to promote healthy relationships and arrangements between parents to promote good outcomes for the children. Even if not living together, parents who are involved in the lives of their children must be able to work together without involving the children in the problems of the parents. Teaching parenting skills can help parents with this, however the services must take into account that fathers at different stages in

their lives have different needs and these also affect the needs of their children. Also, fathers from different cultures will be most open to receiving information presented to them in a culturally sensitive manner.

4. What State Government Can Do

State government is in a unique position to provide leadership and impetus to fatherhood programming throughout the state. A logical starting point is for state government to examine its own policies and practices to ensure that they do not present barriers to fathers' involvement with their families. Encourage State government to use its leadership to:

- **Partner with business, communities and education to help us secure one of Governor Vilsack's goals of "Better Paid Iowans"; a living wage is an important key to helping fathers support their children.**
- **Examine the existing policies and practices of all branches of government to determine their degree of father-friendliness and their customer service orientation.**
- **Coordinate various programs to complement each other and acknowledge family and fathering issues.** Significant interest already exists in Iowa to work on fatherhood issues, and efforts stemming from this interest need to be coordinated. The Task Force believes Iowa State government should facilitate the coordination of the various projects to ensure that they are based on the guiding principles contained in this report.
- **Ensure that publicly funded programs are based upon guiding principles defined in this report.**
- **Ensure that programming is provided for fathers with widely varied needs.** There are many different kinds of noncustodial fathers – adoptive dads, step dads and never-married dads. Some dads have mental health problems, substance abuse problems, or are mentally challenged. Some dads are from other cultures. The programming offered to help these fathers overcome their personal and financial barriers to involvement with their children must take into account the varied needs of each of these fathers and their children.
- **Strive for a balanced approach between prevention and intervention for initiatives, programs, funding, and policy making.** In developing and expanding programs for fatherhood, it is important to ensure that the focus remains balanced between programs, policies and funding that strive to remedy existing problems and those that focus on prevention. Early involvement of fathers seems to result in longer-term and more consistent

involvement, but some experienced fathers have needs which, if met, would help them overcome barriers to their involvement with their children.

- **Monitor and report on initiatives, results, lessons learned and best practices.** Another crucial part of state government's role in developing fatherhood efforts is to ensure that all programs developed within Iowa have results that can be observed and quantified. Through having clear long-term goals and outcomes, newly developing programs can align their outcomes towards these goals and outcomes and include indicators and performance measures that accurately reflect their results. State government, through the locus described in recommendation #1, can provide technical assistance and coordination to programs inside and outside state government to help to measure short-term and long-term success.
- **Provide technical assistance to measure results to ensure that all fatherhood programs developed within the state have demonstrable and measurable results.**
- **Support the courts in considering the importance of the roles of fathers when issuing decisions that affect families.** This support should include addressing fatherhood issues in judges' conferences. The Task Force recognizes the important role the court system plays in supporting fatherhood; however, we were not able to address these concerns directly.

The Task Force is also interested in seeing the following areas of concern, stated by the Interagency Work Group on Responsible Parenthood in their report of December, 2000, addressed:

- A. **Office Hours** – Services are offered only during the business day that limits employed parents access to services.
- B. **Targeted Populations** – Services are targeted for a specific population in an effort to contain costs. Eligibility requirements limit the population to be served. Consequently, there are parents who do not receive needed services.
- C. **No Incentive for Both Parents Being Involved** – When children are being served, there are no requirements that both parents are involved. Often only one parent is asked to participate which, in most cases, is the mother.
- D. **Requires More Effort** – More effort which includes resources, time and training of staff is necessary to include both parents.
- E. **Staff Uncomfortable in Delivering Services to 'Fractured Families'** – Providing services to families, where issues have not been resolved, may escalate the family difficulties.

- F. **Lack of Expectation that Fathers be Involved** – Services have been designed to serve mothers and children. Often, fathers have not been considered in the delivery of the service.
- G. **Fragmented Delivery System** – There is no systematic approach for wrapping services around the entire family.
- H. **Lack of Affordable and Available Services** – Services that are often needed are not available or are offered at a cost that is prohibitive.
- I. **Focus has been on when Families are in Trouble** – Little attention has been paid to families before their situation escalates to a crisis.
- J. **Timeliness of Prevention** – Educational information that might prevent problems is not offered at opportune times.
- K. **Control of Policy/Practice is Diffuse** – Policies may be independently created and implemented by federal, state, and local delivery systems without any consistency or coordination.

The Task Force believes state government must begin by addressing and working to remedy problems that exist in these areas.

5. What the Educational System Can Do

Make the educational system at all levels aware of the importance of involving both parents in their children's educational development.

Information about the relationship between fatherlessness and educational attainment and in-school behavior of children underscores this recommendation.

In studies involving over 25,000 children using nationally representative data sets, children who lived with only one parent had lower grade point averages, lower college aspirations, poorer attendance records, and higher drop out rates than students who lived with both parents. Source: McLanahan, Sara and Gary Sandefur. **Growing Up with a Single Parent: What Hurts, What Helps**. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994.

A survey of over 20,000 parents found that when fathers are involved in their children's education including attending school meetings and volunteering at school, children were more likely to get A's, enjoy school, and participate in extracurricular activities and less likely to have repeated a grade. Source: **Fathers' Involvement in Their Children's Schools**. National Center for Education Statistics. Washington DC: GPO, 1997.

Children who exhibited violent misbehavior in school were 11 times as likely not to live with their fathers and 6 times as likely to have parents who were not married. Boys from families with absent fathers and divorced parents are at higher risk for violent behavior than boys from intact families. Source: Sheline, Jonathan L., Betty J. Skipper and W. Eugene Broadhead. **"Risk Factors for Violent Behavior in Elementary Schools Boys: Have You Hugged Your Child Today?"** American Journal of Public Health 84 (1994): 661-663.

Schools have made strides towards more actively involving both parents in their children's education. This is much more difficult when the parents live apart, especially if they have relationship issues with each other or their children. When schools do seek to include both parents in the distribution of information about school events, parent-teacher conferences, and the individual progress made by every child, additional time and record-keeping on the part of school administrative offices is required. However, children with involved fathers statistically are more successful students.

Age- and developmentally appropriate curricula could be developed to teach children about the importance of both parents to the lives of their children and also to teach them about the roles and responsibilities of being loving, involved parents. Children exposed to this sort of curriculum throughout their educational experience will have a better chance of understanding the skills and commitment needed to become responsible parents.

6. What Professionals Who Work With Families Can Do

Encourage mental health, substance abuse, adult corrections, juvenile justice, and child welfare professionals to recognize that their work with their clients and customers strongly affects good parenting. Emphasize parenting education as part of the treatment.

The importance of fathers to children in the area of emotional health and substance abuse prevention is readily demonstrated by the following information.

Eighty percent of adolescents in psychiatric hospitals come from broken homes. Source: Elshtain, Jean Bethke. **"Family Matters: The Plight of America's Children."** The Christian Century (July 1993): 14-21.

Adolescent females between the ages of 15 and 19 years reared in homes without fathers are significantly more likely to engage in premarital sex than adolescent females reared in homes with both a mother and a father. Source: Billy, John O. G., Karin L. Brewster and William R. Grady. **"Contextual Effects on the Sexual Behavior of Adolescent Women."** Journal of Marriage and Family 56 (1994): 381-404.

Children in single-parent families are two to three times as likely as children in two-parent families to have emotional and behavioral problems; 85% of all children who display behavioral disorders come from fatherless homes.

Sources: Institute for Responsible Fatherhood and Family Revitalization, quoting from a recent study by Men Against Domestic Violence and U. S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Center for Health Statistics. **"National Health Interview Survey."** Hyattsville, MD, 1988.

Children who live apart from their fathers are 4.3 times more likely to smoke cigarettes as teenagers than children growing up with their fathers in the home. Source: Stanton, Warren R., Tian P.S. Oci and Phil A. Silva. **"Sociodemographic Characteristics of Adolescent Smokers."** The International Journal of the Addictions 7 (1994): 913-925.

"...the absence of the father from the home affects significantly the behavior of adolescents and results in greater use of alcohol and marijuana." Source: Beman, Deane Scott. **"Risk Factors Leading to Adolescent Substance Abuse."** Adolescence 30 (1995): 201-206.

The Task Force wants to encourage all professionals in the areas of mental health, substance abuse, adult corrections, juvenile justice, and child welfare to recognize the importance of fathers. In their work with men in these areas, professionals should include issues of fatherhood, parenting education, and parent/child issues as an integral part of the treatment provided.

7. What the Correctional System Can Do

Develop pre- and post-incarceration programs, including provisions to extend supports after release for both juveniles and adult males.

"I met with a group of young men at our juvenile prison not long ago...everyone of them had grown up without a father in the home...Then I finally asked them point blank: Would it have made a difference if your dad had been around... if he'd helped you with your homework or played ball with you, if he'd been there to teach you right from wrong? That's when I actually saw the tears coming. And I had my answer. It would have made all the difference." Source: South Carolina Governor David M. Beasley at the Governor's Fatherhood Summit, Charleston, South Carolina, September 30, 1997.

"The likelihood that a young male will engage in criminal activity doubles if he is raised without a father and triples if he lives in a neighborhood with a high concentration of single-parent families." Source: Hill, M. Anne and June O'Neill. **Underclass Behaviors in the United States: Measurement and Analysis of Determinants.** City University of New York, Baruch College (1993).

Children in single-parent families are more likely to be in trouble with the law than their peers who grow up with two parents; 85% of all youths sitting in prisons grew up in fatherless homes. Sources: Institute for Responsible Fatherhood and Family Revitalization, quoting from a recent study by Men Against Domestic Violence and U. S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Center for Health Statistics. **"National Health Interview Survey."** Hyattsville, MD, 1988.

Male adults and juveniles entering the correctional system are often fathers. They have children who need to maintain contact with them even though they are incarcerated. Available information demonstrates the importance of children having their incarcerated fathers remain in a fathering role with their children.

Prior to sentencing, the Task Force encourages the inclusion of information in pre-sentence investigations about men's status as fathers and their relationships with their own children and their fathers. As an example, Iowa could consider that a parenting plan be developed, to be carried out during incarceration.

Correctional facilities should address fathering in parenting programs provided during incarceration, and especially as fathers are preparing to exit. This includes parenting skills training, as well as finding ways for the fathers to retain some contact with their children while they are serving their sentences. Also, correctional facilities could seek to provide an environment for visits that support the parent/child relationship.

The Task Force understands and affirms the importance of maintaining security during visit times, and also believes it is important that facilities work to minimize the institutional nature of visits. Incarcerated fathers need help to find alternative ways to maintain contact with their children and to continue in the role as fathers.

The Bureau of Collections should examine how to equitably address child support obligations during incarceration and how to address the burden of unpaid support for men being released from prison. While fathers need to do their best to support their families even while they are incarcerated, under the current system these child support debts may grow so large that they may significantly interfere with a father's ability to support and be involved with his children after release.

At the time men leave their incarceration, there is a need to help men find jobs and provide the long-term mentoring and coaching they need to maintain stable employment. The experience of several programs shows that this mentoring must be intensive and continuous over a long period, perhaps as long as several years. Many of the men in prisons have no history of maintaining stable employment or supporting their families.

8. What Employers and Private Business Can Do

Seek to make the workplace more family- and parent-friendly. In order to be a more family-friendly and father-inclusive workplace, employers -- state government and private employers -- must provide a workplace that helps create healthy, stable, safe, and stronger families and a more productive workforce. A father-inclusive workplace:

- **Includes the needs of fathers in the personnel policies.** Employers who are family friendly need to work at creating and promoting these ideals within the workplace by openly and actively supporting their employees in meeting their family responsibilities. Fathers need to be able to receive the same benefits offered to mothers in areas such as child care, leave to care for sick children, and time off to attend medical appointments and school-related functions. Having equitable personnel policies for both parents helps build families in which the parents, even though living apart, may share responsibilities.
- **Gives active attention to creating and promoting an inclusive family-friendly environment through advertisement, the physical layout of the workplace, childcare, and other employee services.**
- **Knows that subtle things make a difference.** Names of programs – Women Infant Children, Maternal Child Health – can discourage fathers since they appear to be for only mothers. Signs in waiting rooms often show only mothers interacting with children. Magazines in reception areas often are addressed only to women customers. Often men's rooms do not have baby changing tables. Grocery stores may offer special parking only for mothers with babies. All these provide a message that fathers are not equally responsible for the nurturing and raising of children. In order to be father-friendly, employers need to become sensitive to the subtle messages they give their male employees and make these messages more father- and family-friendly.
- **Includes both parents in the wording of personnel policies.**

"Contrary to the speculation that family participation will hinder men's careers, fathers who cared for their children's intellectual development and their adolescent's social development were more likely to advance in their occupations." Source: Snarey, J. **How Fathers Care for the Next Generation: A Four-Decade Study.** Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993.

When 1500 CEOs and human resource directors were asked how much leave is reasonable for a father to take after the birth of a child, 63 percent indicated "none." Source: Pleck, J.H. **"Family Supportive Employer Policies: Are They Relevant to Men?"** Wellesley, MA: Center for Research on Women, 1991.

In order to be able to support their families, fathers need opportunities for jobs that pay a living wage. Private employers can proactively participate in economic development initiatives that support the Governor's goal of "Better Paid Iowans" as a way to help fathers in their employment support their families.

9. What Workforce Programs Can Do

Build on existing work programs by linking their impacts on fatherhood.

One quarter of non-custodial fathers agreed with the statement, "If I were visiting my children more regularly, I would feel more like paying child support." Source: Pearson, Jessica and Jean Anhalt. **"Examining the Connection between Child Access and Child Support."** Family and Conciliation Courts Review 32 (January 1994): 93-109.

Almost 75 percent of American children living in single-parent families will experience poverty before they turn 11 years old. Only 20 percent of children in two-parent families will do the same. In 1991, 47 percent of mother-only families with children were poor. Only 8 percent of families with both a mother and a father were poor. Source: National Commission on Children. **Just the Facts: A Summary of Recent Information on America's Children and their Families.** Washington, DC, 1993.

Fatherless children are five times more likely to live in poverty, compared to children living with both parents. Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. National Center for Health Statistics. **Survey on Child Health.** Washington, DC, 1993.

Financial issues continue to be a problem for many fathers trying to support their families. The issues include earning and earning potential, consumer credit and financial management, and program policies that present barriers to fathers remaining in the home with their children.

The Task Force believes that existing programs can provide a foundation upon which supports can be built. Among these supports are expanding work and training and job keeping programs to help fathers develop ways to upgrade their incomes. This will better prepare them to support their families financially and pay child support obligations.

For those fathers with money management concerns, work-training/job keeping programs should also include credit counseling and budgeting skills. Helping men learn to deal with their financial issues more proactively may prevent or avoid some of their financial crises.

All laws, rules, policies and practices should be examined carefully to ensure that they do not present barriers to fathers remaining in their homes while their families receive the financial supports they need. Included in this examination is addressing the issue of low-income fathers with large unpaid child support debts, the so-called "dead broke dads". The debts present a psychological burden for these men and may be in amounts that the fathers will never be able to pay. The Bureau of Collections needs to examine new ways of addressing these debts that may include satisfying portions owed to the state.

State government and private business should continue to proactively address economic development across the state as a way to raise the economic wellbeing of all citizens, thus benefiting fathers and children.

10. What Parents Can Do

Because we recognize children generally benefit from living with responsible adults in a loving stable relationship that is a partnership, we recommend supporting programs and other strategies that strengthen marriages and other committed relationships.

There are children who have made successful transitions to responsible adulthood because of loving nurturing single parents. There are also some children who live in two-parent families in which an abusive parent does not provide the safe and caring environment that benefits children. When the parents can not live together in a healthy stable partnership, there is still a need for the child to have the emotional and financial support of both parents.

All programs or services provided to fathers or families must be sensitive to issues of safety. The safety of children and families must be a paramount concern. This may include spousal or family violence as well as mental health or substance abuse issues of the parents. The existence of these problems should not preclude involving the parent as long as safety of the family members can be ensured.

VIII. Conclusion



As the members of the Governor's Task Force for Responsible Fatherhood came to understand very early in their term, defining fatherhood issues and barriers and cause and effect, whether through the perspective of children, fathers, mothers, or families, can be a circular and complex process. Throughout the process, the Task Force did not lose sight of the compelling fact that children do

better when they have the positive influence and involvement of both of their parents in their lives.

The variables affecting families today have evolved over recent generations and include many societal evolutions that began in the fifties and sixties, and continued through the nineties. Families mirror society. Or, does society mirror the families that make it up? Either way, we know that the waning of the industrial revolution, the influx of women into the workforce, growing out-of-wedlock birth rates, increased rate of divorce, and the onset of mass media and the information age have changed the face of Iowa's families, and impacted the roles of mothers and fathers.

The Task Force for Responsible Fatherhood feels it is time to devote significant attention to this evolution that has impacted the roles of fathers and mothers. Even though agreement on what problems should be given attention or what strategies will provide the best results was difficult, the Task Force felt a strong commitment to Iowa's children. As a result, they have produced this comprehensive set of recommendations contained within the pages of this report.

The Task Force recognizes many factors such as lack of funds, issues of domestic violence, and disagreement over traditional and liberal family values can become issues that can stop or impede progress. Given this, the Task Force strongly encourages Iowans to work together within their families and through their communities to support the Governor in his concern for the important issues which must be acknowledged and addressed so that fathers can engage effectively in parenting their children.

APPENDIX A

EXECUTIVE ORDER NUMBER FIFTEEN

(reproduction – text only)

- WHEREAS,** Iowans have traditionally recognized that strong families are essential to ensuring that our children will enjoy a secure future; and
- WHEREAS,** Iowans intuitively understand that children need to receive the support and guidance of both parents; and
- WHEREAS,** an emerging set of scientific data supports our belief that a healthy bond between a child and the child's parents has a direct impact on the future success of the child; and
- WHEREAS,** the absence of one parent from a child's life can place that child at greater risk of health, emotional, educational, and behavior problems associated with the child's development; and
- WHEREAS,** for most children, the absent parent is the father; and
- WHEREAS,** studies reveal that children with an absent parent are more likely to develop substance abuse problems, drop out of school, become teenage parents, and engage in criminal behavior than children who maintain healthy bonds with both parents; and
- WHEREAS,** children with two parents who actively and positively engage in their life by providing financial support, love, guidance, and discipline, have a greater chance for success than children who receive active involvement from only one parent.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Thomas J. Vilsack, Governor of the State of Iowa, by the power vested in me by the laws of the constitution of the State of Iowa do hereby order the creation of the INTERAGENCY WORK GROUP ON RESPONSIBLE PARENTHOOD.

- I. Purpose. The Inter-Agency Work Group on Responsible Parenthood is established to complete the following tasks:
 - 1 Identify barriers within state policy and procedures that may act to impede the development of strong emotional and financial bonds of support between both parents and their children;
 2. Identify opportunities that may exist among programs administered by departments to assist the absent parent in providing emotional and financial support for their children;
 3. Propose adjustments to state policy and procedures to reduce barriers that discourage parents from developing a strong foundation of support for their children;

4. Identify promising practices that support and engage both parents in the emotional and financial support of their children;
 - a. Identify services that have been successful in keeping young fathers actively involved in strong parenting role.
 - b. Identify successful approaches for ensuring that fathers obtain and maintain full employment, learn how to be active parents, and develop skills for coping with difficult relationships.
5. Attempt to quantify the benefits that can be gained by increasing the level of active support that children receive from both parents;
6. Make recommendations for additional steps that the State of Iowa should take to remove the barriers that prevent children from receiving the emotional and financial support of both parents.

The work-group shall submit a written report to the governor outlining its finding, conclusions, and recommendations by December 31, 2000.

- II. Organization. The director for the Iowa Department of Human Services will chair the Inter-Agency Work Group on Responsible Parenthood. The work group will consist of representatives from the following state agencies:

- A. Department of Public Health;
- B. Department of Workforce Development;
- C. Department of Education;
- D. Department of Corrections.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I have hereunto subscribed my name and caused the Great Seal of Iowa to be affixed. Done in Des Moines, Iowa this ___ day of March in the year of our Lord two thousand.

Thomas J. Vilsack
Governor

ATTEST:

Chester J. Culver
Secretary of State

APPENDIX B

IN THE NAME AND BY THE AUTHORITY OF THE STATE OF IOWA

EXECUTIVE ORDER NUMBER SEVENTEEN

(reproduction – text only)

- WHEREAS,** Children living in single parent households are more likely to be living in poverty; and
- WHEREAS,** Fatherless children are at a significantly greater risk for drug and alcohol abuse; and
- WHEREAS,** Fatherless children are twice as likely to drop out of school; and
- WHEREAS,** The vast majority of homeless and runaway children are from fatherless homes; and
- WHEREAS,** Iowans intuitively understand that children need to receive the support and guidance of both parents; and
- WHEREAS,** The absence of one parent from a child's life can place that child at greater risk of health, emotional, educational, and behavioral problems associated with the child's development; and
- WHEREAS,** For most children, the absent parent is the father:

NOW, THEREFORE, I, THOMAS J. VILSACK, Governor of the State of Iowa, by the power vested in me under the laws and the constitution of the State of Iowa do hereby order the creation of the TASK FORCE FOR RESPONSIBLE FATHERHOOD.

- I. Purpose. The purpose of the Task Force is to further the understanding of the importance of two parents being actively involved in the lives of a child, with particular emphasis of fathers. The Task Force is charged with the following:
 1. Identify promising best practices that support and engage both parents in the emotional and financial support of their children;
 2. Identify obstacles that impede or prevent the involvement of fathers in the lives of their children;
 3. Raise public awareness of the consequences the absence of the father causes in a child's life;
 4. Make recommendations for policy and practice both within and without state government that

sustain and re-engage fathers in their children's lives; and

5. Report its finding and recommendations to the Governor by March 31, 2002.

- II. Organization: The Task Force shall be appointed by the Governor. It is comprised of the following members:

Elaine Szymoniak, Chair	Des Moines
Harry Brod	Cedar Falls
Tom Klaus	Carlisle
Nancylee Ziese	Cedar Rapids
Ana Lopez-Dawson	Reasnor
Odell McGhee	Des Moines
Matt Mohrfeld	Fort Madison
Cindy Schulte	State Center
Mike Carver	Urbandale
Phyllis Mulkey	Mason City
Joseph Cress	Bettendorf
K.D. Burkett	New Providence
Carol Reed	Fort Dodge

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I have hereunto subscribed my name and caused the Great Seal of Iowa to be affixed. Done in Des Moines, Iowa, this 13th day of February in the year of our Lord Two Thousand One.

Thomas J. Vilsack
Governor

ATTEST:

Chester J. Culver
Secretary of State

APPENDIX C

Members of the Governor's Task Force on Responsible Fatherhood

Elaine Szymoniak, Chair, Des Moines – A long time resident of Des Moines, Elaine Szymoniak holds degrees from the University of Wisconsin and Iowa State University. She practiced for many years as a speech therapist, audiologist and counselor in schools, hospitals, and state agencies. Elaine served as a member of the Des Moines City Council for eleven years and served for twelve years as a State Senator. She has been a member of committees in the National League of Cities and the National Conference of State Legislatures, most recently a member of the committee on Responsible Fathers. Elaine is married and has five children and six grandchildren.

Harry Brod, Cedar Falls - Harry Brod is Associate Professor of Philosophy and Humanities and Director of the University Honors Program at the University of Northern Iowa. He has lectured, taught, and written widely on men's issues and the profeminist men's movement, and is internationally recognized as a pioneer in the academic field of men's studies. Brod's books include *The Making of Masculinities: The New Men's Studies*, *A Mensch Among Men: Explorations in Jewish Masculinity*, *Theorizing Masculinities* and the forthcoming *Just Living: White Men Challenging Racism*. He is the father of two children.

K.D. Burkett New Providence -- K.D. Burkett is the Activity & Resource Center Program Director for Heartland Senior Services, a non-profit organization providing services to persons 60+ in age. His work within the field of Adolescent Sexual Health includes serving on the *Young Men's Sexual and Reproductive Health* working group; Project Director of Legacy Resource Group, in which he was a contributor to the development of the nationally recognized *IT TAKES TWO*, *Worth The Wait Teen Pregnancy Prevention Program*, and *IT TAKES TWO: For Teen Parents program*. K.D. holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology from Buena Vista University (Storm Lake, IA). He makes his home in New Providence, Iowa, with his wife, Julie, where he owns and operates *KDB Photography*, a home-based business. K.D. is the step-father of two adult daughters, Heather and Jennifer.

Mike Carver, Urbandale – Michael Carver works as a commercial real estate broker for Grubb & Ellis Mid-America Pacific. His passion for fathering stems from his primary role in raising his four children over the past twenty years. He has written and spoken often about successful parenting. His thoughts were featured “on being a good dad” on Father’s day in 1995 by the Des Moines Register.

Joseph N. Cress, Ph. D., Bettendorf – Joseph Cress received his AB from St. Louis University in 1968, and his doctorate in clinical psychology from Southern Illinois University in 1974. He completed internships in both adult and child psychology at the University of Rochester Medical Center in Rochester, New York. Prior to becoming a psychologist, he was a high school teacher in St. Louis/s inner city and on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota. Since receiving his Ph D., Dr. Cress has consulted with many educational and social service agencies and has been actively involved with families of children having

Attention Deficit- Hyperactivity Disorder. Over the past 20 years, he has presented seminars both in the U. S and abroad, and his writings have appeared in a number of professional publications. Since 1979, he has maintained a full-time private practice in the Iowa-Illinois Quad Cities. He is married, a father and a foster parent.

Tom Klaus, Carlisle – Tom Klaus is the founder and president of Legacy Resource Group, a consulting and resource development company based in Carlisle, Iowa. He is a nationally recognized speaker, trainer and consultant in adolescent health, sexuality and wellness issues. Since 1996 he has served on the Board of Directors for the National Organization on Adolescent Pregnancy, Parenting and Prevention. Mr. Klaus earned a BA in English and Religion from William Penn University and an MS in Mental Health Counseling from Drake University.

Ana Lopez-Dawson, Ph.D., Psy.D., Reasnor -- Dr. Ana Lopez-Dawson, originally from Caracas, Venezuela is married and has three children (ages 2, 6 and 9). She obtained a Ph.D. and a Psy.D. degree in Clinical Psychology from Nova Southeastern University. She completed her internship through Harvard University in the area of Pediatric Psychology and obtained postdoctoral training in the area of neuropsychology through the University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics. Dr. Lopez-Dawson, along with her husband, Bruce Dawson, Psy.D. in 1999 founded Clinical Assessment & Treatment Services, P.C. (CATS, P.C.), a mental health clinic servicing children and families from diverse populations. Currently, she serves as Clinical Director and provides clinical services to clients in the clinic, their homes, and other community settings.

As one of the few bilingual Clinical Psychologists in Iowa, Dr. Lopez-Dawson works extensively with Iowa's Hispanic population. Areas of specialty include abuse and neglect, divorce and family disruption, pregnancy-related matters, and acculturation issues. She provides counseling services and conducts psychological, forensic, and educational assessments. She is a strong believer in helping to empower others through the attainment of knowledge. As such, Dr. Lopez-Dawson conducts presentations and promotes the delivery of information to the community.

Odell McGhee, Des Moines – Odell McGhee is a graduate of Cornell College, Mt. Vernon, Iowa and Drake University Law School. He is presently employed as an attorney with the Polk County Attorney's Office. He is president of the Iowa National Bar Association, Chairman of the Des Moines Waterworks Commission; Minister of Community Programs for the Corinthian Baptist Church; former Chairman of the Morris Scholarship Fund; and a community activist for children. Mr. McGhee is married to Jacqueline Easley and they have two children, Carey and Ty.

Matt Mohrfeld, Fort Madison - Matt Mohrfeld, a member of the Lee County Board of Supervisors, was the youngest in a family of nine. Matt is a lifelong resident of Lee County where two of his brothers still operate the farm on which the family was raised. He owns and operates the Greenhouse and Flower Cottage in Fort Madison, a business involving wholesale and retail sales of plants and flowers. Matt has served on the Lee County Fair

Board, the Lee County Extension Board, the Fort Madison Chamber of Commerce, and the Fort Madison Convention and Visitors Bureau. Matt and his wife, Beth, are expecting their first child in February, 2002.

Phyllis Mulkey, Mason City - Phyllis Mulkey is the Coordinator for the North Central Iowa Decategorization Project, located in Mason City. She has Bachelor degrees in Psychology and Sociology. Prior employment has been in the area of law enforcement and juvenile corrections. The mother of three married sons and grandmother of nine beautiful and brilliant grandchildren (two of whom have been affected by divorce), she believes strongly in the importance of both parents having an integral and positive role in the lives of their children.

Carol Reed, Fort Dodge – Carol Reed is a former teacher and youth counselor. She has a Master's Degree in Guidance and Counseling. She has done lots of volunteer work at the Fort Dodge Public Library and in the Fort Dodge Community Schools. She is the mother of two sons who are 24 and 22 years of age.

Cindy Schulte, State Center - Cindy Schulte is the store manager of Younkers in Marshalltown. She is also vice-chair of the Marshalltown Chamber of Commerce and chair of the membership committee for that organization, chairman of the community and your services committee of the Marshalltown Rotary Club, past board member of the Child Abuse Prevention Services Board, and past board member of the Iowa 4-H Foundation. Through Younkers in-store events Cindy has been instrumental in raising over \$100,000 for non-profit organizations that promote healthy family environments in Marshall, Hardin, and Tama counties. Cindy is a graduate of Iowa State University, with a BS in fashion merchandizing. She is married and has two children, Brad, age 14 and Stephanie, age 11.

Nancylee Ziese, Cedar Rapids – Nancylee Ziese has a masters degree in Social Work plus course work toward a Ph.D. She is a Licensed Independent Social Worker with 26 years experience in social work, primarily in the area of adoption and pregnancy counseling and some studies in custody disputes. Nancylee has served on more than 30 boards of directors on local and state levels including two terms on the Sioux City School Board and is currently serving on the Episcopal Diocese of Iowa Standing Committee, the Cedar Rapids Civil Rights Commission and the Board of Trustees of the Young Parents Network which serves young mothers and fathers and expectant young parents in a five county area. Nancylee is married with one child.

APPENDIX D

State Government Agency Representatives to the Governor's Task Force for Responsible Fatherhood & Special Thanks & Acknowledgements

Agency Representatives

Kris Bell, Iowa Department of Management, Empowerment

Mariette Brodeur, Governor Vilsack's Office

Tony Dietsch, Iowa Workforce Development

Martha Gelhaus, Iowa Department of Public Health

John Goeldner, Iowa Department of Corrections

Sally Kreamer, Iowa Department of Corrections

Marion Kresse, Iowa Department of Education, Early Access

Dianne Milobar, Iowa Workforce Development

Mary Mohrhauser, Iowa Department of Human Services, Division of Adult, Children, and Family Services

Dick Moore, Iowa Department of Human Rights

Linda Mount, Iowa Department of Human Services, Division of Economic Assistance

Jeanne Nesbit, Iowa Department of Human Services, Division of Child Support, Case Management, and Refugee Services

Dr. Ed Schor, Iowa Department of Public Health

Nancy Thoma, Iowa Department of Human Services, Bureau of Collections

Shanell Wagler, Iowa Department of Management

Special Thanks

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Mr. Dennis Albrecht, Minnesota Department of Human Services

The Rev. Ted Anderson, Milwaukee (Wisconsin) Fatherhood Initiative

Mr. Ted German, Boston University

Mr. Gary Greenfield, Dads Make a Difference, University of Minnesota Extension Service

Mr. Raymond Herrera, California Department of Human Services

Mr. Clarence Jones, St. Paul (Minnesota) Urban League

Ms. Susan Schechter, University of Iowa School of Social Work

Mr. Neil Tift, National Practitioner's Network for Fathers and Families

Special thanks to the staff to the Task Force from the Iowa Department of Human Services, Bureau of Collections: Stephen Gross, Karen Frohwein, and Shannon Krueger.

APPENDIX E

Presenters to the Governor's Task Force for Responsible Fatherhood

Presenters from within state government included:

- ☐ Jeanne Nesbit, Administrator of the Division of Child Support, Refugee Services and Targeted Case Management, Iowa Department of Human Services, indicated that in the last five years many states and the Federal government developed performance measures for child support. This has led to work on addressing barriers to payment of support.
- ☐ Tony Dietsch, Iowa Workforce Development (Welfare to Work), indicated programs which specifically target fathers or noncustodial parents is a new concept. He discussed Welfare-to-Work Projects with the Child Support Recovery Unit (CSRU) to reach out to non-custodial parents with employment and training opportunities;
- ☐ Sally Kreamer, Iowa Department of Corrections, discussed current parenting programs offered to inmates of Iowa correctional facilities. Programs are taking place in Mt. Pleasant, Rockwell City, and Polk County. Visitation by children whose parents are incarcerated occurs less often for women because custodial fathers are less likely than custodial mothers to bring children to see incarcerated parents. The Department of Corrections is experimenting with ways to reward inmates through giving them contact with their children.
- ☐ Martha Gelhaus, Iowa Department of Public Health and Linda Swenson, Iowa Department of Human Services, discussed Executive Order 15 and the report of the Interagency Work Group with the Task Force.
- ☐ Nancy Thoma, Chief, Bureau of Collections, discussed Iowa's child support program including Welfare-to-Work and the Parental Obligation Pilot Projects.

Other presenters to the Task Force included:

- ☐ Michael Hayes, trainer from the National Center for Strategic Non-profit Planning and Community Leadership (NPCL) worked with the Task Force to envision a state wide approach to supporting fathers and families, and identifying their next steps.
- ☐ The Rev. Keith Meeks of the Serve Our Youth Network (SOY), a faith-based program based in their Center for Fathering that requires participants to commit to be in the child's life, and for one-year to meet face to face with mentors.
- ☐ Carol Reed, Task Force member, reported on three programs in the Ft. Dodge area: the Ft. Dodge Correctional facility's "Dads Make a Difference program"; the Church of the Damascus Road "Storytime" which allows the inmates to audio tape themselves reading a book to their children, and the tape and the book are sent to the children; and a recently started "Responsible Fathers Program" that presents 25 sessions on parenting topics, and is based on a Minnesota prison program also used in the Mt. Pleasant facility.

- Ron Nichols, trainer for the National Center for Fathering, discussed his agency's finding that there are three components that must be addressed in Fatherhood programs: Policy, Awareness and Training (P/A/T). He also pointed out that (1) working with spousal relationships is crucial for both the children and the parents (2) it is essential to insure accessibility of information to non-English speaking parents and (3) this field is too new to have good statistical information, and available information is often anecdotal.
- Neil Tift, consultant and trainer for the National Practitioner's Network for Fathers and Families, discussed how state agencies can assess themselves on their father-inclusive practices.
- John Jeffries, the Vera Institute, discussed their plans to provide effective statistical record keeping and their work with the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

APPENDIX F

LEADING STATES INFORMATION

The following information has been gathered through published sources and Family Service Unit staff conducting phone interviews with states who are regarded as leaders in the area of fatherhood initiatives. Gathering information from other states on this new field proves to be a challenge to both national organizations and local staff.

In September of 2001, National Practitioners Network for Fathers and Families (NPNFF) published **A Comparative Review of State Commissions, Initiatives, and Programs Addressing Fatherhood Issues**. This report was prepared for the Office of Child Support Enforcement, Georgia Department of Human Resources. NPNFF research identified formally established state government fatherhood commissions, initiatives and programs in 30 states and the District of Columbia. The following is a synopsis of activities:

- ☐ State level Fatherhood Commissions created by the action of the governor – 3 states (IA, MA, NC)
- ☐ Fatherhood Initiatives created by the governor – 9 states (AL, MD, DE, PA, SC, TX, UT, VA, WI and by the mayor of the District of Columbia)
- ☐ Fatherhood Commissions created by the state legislature – 2 states (FL, OH)
- ☐ Fatherhood Initiatives created by the state legislature – 4 states (CO, CT, LA, AZ)
- ☐ The remaining 14 states have programs or initiatives created by agency directive. Of those 14 states, seven were established by the state's Office of Child Support Enforcement. National Practitioners Network for Fathers and Families, **A Comparative Review of State Commissions, Initiatives, and Programs Addressing Fatherhood Issues**. Prepared for the Office of Child Support Enforcement, Georgia Department of Human Services. Sept. 2001.

NPNFF also noted that Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Massachusetts, Oklahoma, and Pennsylvania support or provide the most comprehensive services, based on the surveys returned for their report. Alabama, Maryland, and Mississippi have recently made significant investments into their recently established fatherhood initiatives. Louisiana is the latest state to begin a fatherhood initiative, with state legislation passed in their 2001 session.

Bureau of Collections staff contacted fourteen states recognized as leaders in fatherhood programs, or acknowledged by national organizations as being effective in services to involve fathers. Many of these states have been sites of national pilots and demonstration projects. The states contacted were Arizona, California, Connecticut, Florida, Illinois, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Missouri, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Texas, Virginia & Wisconsin.

The purpose of the phone interviews was to gather responses to the following questions:

1. Does your state currently have a Fatherhood Commission?
2. What fatherhood programs are currently being provided?
3. What has been learned from your experiences? Do you have any best practice information available?
4. How is success measured?

Of the fourteen states contacted, four reported they currently have a Commission for Responsible Fatherhood (MA, FL, MD as of 10/01, and NC) and four have Fatherhood Initiatives (PA, TX, CT, VA).

Over half of the states contacted place emphasis on:

1. Developing a multi-media public awareness campaign and activities to educate the public on the importance of fathers in the lives of their children. Many of the states held regional fatherhood conferences or forums for service providers and fathers or hosted public meetings across the state to increase awareness.
2. Creating collaboratives or partnerships between various governmental agencies and community organizations to provide a full array of supportive services to address the needs of fathers. As a result of this effort, some states developed Fatherhood Resource Centers, Fathers' Services Directories or set up toll free phone lines to access fatherhood resources across the state.
3. Employment & training programs for unemployed or underemployed fathers, including job readiness, placement & job retention services. Fatherhood development is another important component and includes peer support, parenting programs, father-child activities and mentoring programs.

Approximately a third of the states contacted have fatherhood programs that work with state correctional institutions to provide outreach services and child support information and education to incarcerated or paroled fathers. Also a third of the states contacted have fatherhood initiative grant programs available to community based responsible fatherhood/male involvement programs in order to expand existing fatherhood programs or create new ones. These grants are awarded to community organizations to increase awareness of the importance of fathers, strengthen families and foster better relationships among family members and encourage parental responsibility.

The following themes emerged in discussion with the 14 selected states on best practices or lessons learned:

1. Focus on changing the public's perception of fatherhood - the positives of father involvement and the benefit to children must be stressed to the public, media, communities, mothers and fathers.
2. Establish partnerships & collaborations - involve all the major players in the planning process, including the media, community, state agencies and faith-based organizations. Everyone needs to buy in to the concept and trust needs to be built between the partners so that they can coordinate their efforts instead of everyone doing their own thing. Also the group should be open to expanding to include other partners as they are identified or needed. It is important for the collaborative group to have regular meetings so they can discuss changes and evaluate what is working

and what is not. (The NPNFF report commented on the lack of collaboration between state agencies, to the point that some state programs are not aware of the work of other programs in their own state addressing fatherhood issues.)

3. Involve fathers – speak in the language fathers understand (differences depending on age, race, culture, income level), go to where the fathers are to recruit and provide services, listen to what fathers want and let them choose the services they need.

Reports by NPNFF and other national fatherhood organizations point to the need for clear planning, measurable outcomes, identification of successful models for service delivery, and regular program evaluations to make adjustments and document progress. Unfortunately, surveys of the states indicate most lack adequate program size and the ability to collect and maintain data to monitor results and identify best practices.

Many of the fatherhood programs' measures are related to such things as number of calls, participants, job placements or organizations that received training, amount of child support payments, and the father's level of involvement with his children. Results are measured by services provided and cost of services (quantitative) instead of changes in the life of the children or parents (qualitative).

The interest in measures and evaluation is clear in the states surveyed. Connecticut has recently hired the National Practitioners Network for Fathers & Families to audit all state programs using a systems change approach. Florida is now focusing on how to document the results they have seen through sound research principles and has hired a staff person for that purpose.

APPENDIX G

BIBLIOGRAPHY OF INFORMATION USED BY THE GOVERNOR'S TASKFORCE FOR RESPONSIBLE FATHERHOOD

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- Me and My Dad, an Iowa State University Extension Service
<http://www.extension.iastate.edu/dads/>
- Parenting Monthly, a website facilitated by the ChildNet/Childcare Resource & Referral of Central Iowa
<http://www.parentingmonthly.org/>

OTHER FATHERHOOD INTERNET RESOURCES

- Colorado Governor's Initiative on Responsible Fatherhood.
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